



SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

As shown in Seaport Table 1, the Seaport's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from October's rate of 5.0 percent to 4.7 percent in November. In November 1999 the rate was 3.2 percent. Total employment increased in November but is significantly below November 1999. November employment increased 660 from October 2000, but unemployment decreased only by 100, suggesting most of the new employment was in holiday related work. Hiring for holiday shopping is a normal event that usually starts in October. However, this year, hiring didn't start until later in November. Employers said they delayed hiring to get a feel of consumer's attitude. According to comments made by businesses in *Retail Trade*, sales this year were below last year, which was only an average year.

In November, Seaport's *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 380 from October 2000, but decreased 1,170 from November 1999. New jobs in November were found most often in *Trade and Services*. Still, these new jobs resulted from holiday hiring, which are temporary in nature. Even with the increase, holiday hiring was down from last year and started a month later than usual. Because of the late start, jobs were shorter in duration. Stores waited to hire for the holidays because of the concern with layoffs in other industries. During 2000, layoffs occurred in *Food Processing*, *Metal Fabrication*, and *Lumber & Wood Products*. More layoffs are being discussed in *Manufacturing*, which has a left a black cloud of concern over the economy for 2001 in this region.

SPECIAL TOPICS: WAGES

Local businesses are evaluating compensation packages to determine whether to increase wages for 2001. Employers usually look at the cost of living (Consumer Price Index) first. As of October 2000, the Consumer Price Index was 174.0—a 3.3 percent increase from October 1999. Employers also look at wage trends from the previous year.

Clearwater County: Average wages in 2000 decreased in all industries except for *Trade and Government*. The average wage per worker increased only 0.5 percent. Clearwater County has been hard hit by layoffs in *Lumber & Wood Products*. A method to calcu-

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho, and Asotin County, Washington

	Nov 2000*	Oct 2000	Nov 1999	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	34,500	33,940	35,400	1.6	-2.5
Unemployment	1,610	1,710	1,150	-5.8	40.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.7%	5.0%	3.2%	-0.3%	-1.5%
Total Employment	32,890	32,230	34,250	2.0	-4.0
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	34,390	33,680	35,330	2.1	-2.7
Unemployment	1,460	1,430	1,040	2.1	40.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.2%	4.2%	2.9%	0.0%	-1.3%
Total Employment	32,930	32,250	34,290	2.1	-4.0
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	25,150	24,770	26,320	1.5	-4.4
Goods-Producing Industries	4,840	4,780	5,490	1.3	-11.8
Mining & Construction	1,080	1,110	1,380	-2.7	-21.7
Manufacturing	3,760	3,670	4,110	2.5	-8.5
Food Processing	60	70	140	-14.3	-57.1
Lumber & Wood Products	710	680	780	4.4	-9.0
Paper Products	1,760	1,730	1,820	1.7	-3.3
All Other Manufacturing	1,230	1,190	1,370	3.4	-10.2
Service-Producing Industries	20,310	19,990	20,830	1.6	-2.5
Transportation	1,360	1,340	1,350	1.5	0.7
Communications & Utilities	260	260	270	0.0	-3.7
Wholesale Trade	1,080	1,070	1,070	0.9	0.9
Retail Trade	5,360	5,240	5,440	2.3	-1.5
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,380	1,350	1,460	2.2	-5.5
Services	6,710	6,560	6,990	2.3	-4.0
Government Administration	1,780	1,780	1,760	0.0	1.1
Government Education	2,380	2,390	2,490	-0.4	-4.4
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

late the real change or buying power in wages is to subtract the cost of living from the change in wages. Using this method, buying power from Clearwater County wages decreased 2.9 percent in 2000.

Idaho County: The average wage per worker in 2000 increased in all industries except for *Manufacturing*, *Transportation*, and *Communication and Utilities*. Idaho County had the highest increase of the five counties in North Central Idaho. Buying power from Idaho County wages increased only 1.8 percent in 2000 using the previously described calculation.

Latah County: The average wage per worker decreased 4.5 percent in 2000. The decrease means that buying power decreased significantly when figuring in the rate of inflation at 3.3 percent. Using this method, buying power from Latah County wages decreased 7.8 percent in 2000. The largest employment category, *Government*, posted a 14.1 percent decrease in wages.

Lewis County: Overall, wages decreased by 0.6 percent in 2000. The loss of high-paying *Manufacturing* jobs from cutbacks in *Lumber & Wood Products* caused the average wage per worker to decrease. Buying power from Lewis County

Seaport Table 2: Wages per Covered Worker

	Clearwater County			Idaho County			Latah County			Lewis County			Nez Perce County		
	1999	2000	% Chg	1999	2000	% Chg	1999	2000	% Chg	1999	2000	% Chg	1999	2000	% Chg
Construction	\$24,798	\$19,529	-21.2	\$18,169	\$20,446	12.5	\$21,971	\$22,495	2.4	\$19,739	\$19,626	-0.6	\$28,729	\$30,146	4.9
Manufact.	\$31,513	\$29,906	-5.1	\$31,621	\$29,970	-5.2	\$31,534	\$29,958	-5.0	\$24,280	\$23,125	-4.8	\$44,335	\$44,580	0.6
Trans., Comm., & Utilities	\$25,794	\$23,475	-9.0	\$29,741	\$28,481	-4.2	\$26,688	\$25,632	-4.0	\$17,486	\$16,663	-4.7	\$28,451	\$28,932	1.7
Trade	\$14,596	\$14,714	0.8	\$14,898	\$14,864	-0.2	\$14,005	\$15,004	7.1	\$15,295	\$15,390	0.6	\$16,906	\$16,795	-0.7
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	\$16,585	\$16,000	-3.5	\$19,782	\$24,149	22.1	\$21,703	\$21,663	-0.2	\$13,974	\$14,488	3.7	\$30,094	\$31,631	5.1
Service	\$18,695	\$18,644	-0.3	\$16,241	\$16,390	0.9	\$18,366	\$19,286	5.0	\$17,286	\$16,058	-7.1	\$22,828	\$23,122	1.3
Government	\$25,203	\$27,110	7.6	\$25,302	\$29,623	17.1	\$30,381	\$26,082	-14.2	\$20,873	\$21,536	3.2	\$28,172	\$27,898	-1.0
Annual Avg. by County	\$23,992	\$24,103	0.5	\$22,500	\$23,659	5.1	\$23,086	\$22,047	-4.5	\$18,850	\$18,746	-0.6	\$27,185	\$27,420	0.9
State of Idaho	\$26,049	\$27,412	5.2	\$26,049	\$27,412	5.2	\$26,049	\$27,412	5.2	\$26,049	\$27,412	5.2	\$26,049	\$27,412	5.2

wages decreased 3.9 percent in 2000, when subtracting the CPI.

Nez Perce County: Average wages increased in all industries except for *Trade* and *Government*. However, the average change was only 0.9 percent. *Manufacturing* traditionally pays the highest wage. Buying power from Nez Perce County wages decreased 2.4 percent in 2000, when subtracting the CPI.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Clearwater County

- Nearly \$2 million in grants are being sought for an industrial park in Orofino. The city of Orofino, by offering an 11-acre parcel along U.S. Highway 12 west of the Orofino Bridge, appears to have satisfied any dollar-matching requirements, which was a hurdle in obtaining the grants. The grant monies would be used to improve the industrial park site by installing utilities, improving road access and building a 24,000-square foot building to house businesses. ASE expects to use about 12,000-square feet and hopefully other tenants could be found for the other half of the building. All tenants would have leases with the city. To lease space, businesses need to show that new jobs are being created.
- The rippling effect of the closure of Potlatch Corporation Jaype plywood plant near Pierce is widening in Clearwater County. The Orofino-based School District 171 is feeling the drain of students leaving as their families move elsewhere to look for jobs.

Idaho County

- About 70 workers who were temporarily laid off at Shearer Lumber at Elk City, and 85 employees who were temporarily laid off at Three Rivers Timber at Kamiah, returned to work January 2nd. The layoffs are blamed on the decreases in the lumber market. According to officials at both mills, the Lumber Index, the number used to compare the market over the course of the year, dropped from \$286 in November to \$266 in December. A year ago it was \$383. Shearer Lumber is also suffering from the abandonment of the Camas Prairie RailNet line from Spalding to

Grangeville. Shearer estimates their shipping costs will increase \$100,000 per year as a direct result of the closure of the line.

Latah County

- A British Columbia-based mining company is looking to develop an open-pit kaolin clay mine on state land in the Helmer-Bovill area. Alchemy Venture Ltd. has filed a lease application on about 10,000 acres of state land and is test drilling in the area to determine the value of clay deposits there. Kaolin clay is used as filler in several products, including paper and paint. Clay has been mined in the Bovill-Deary area since 1993 for bricks, fine china, and as an ingredient in the medicine Kaopectate. According to Venture's geologist, the deposits in the Helmer-Bovill area rival those in the Georgia kaolin belt that produce \$2 billion of economic activity each year and employ thousands of people. The company expects to complete feasibility studies this summer, with a target date to start mining of summer 2002.

Nez Perce and Asotin (Wa.) Counties

- Three new restaurants have opened in Lewiston and Clarkston. Christopher's has opened at 300 D Street in Lewiston, the China Country Buffet is located in the Clarkston Center on Third Street, and Poorman's Southwestern Café is located at 316 18th Street in Lewiston.
- A new business, Baskets and Blooms, has opened at 455 Thain Road in Lewiston. Locally owned, the store produces gift baskets that contain items that celebrate occasions such as anniversaries or the arrival of a new baby. Others focus on hobbies such as gardening and fishing.

Doug Tweedy, Labor Market Analyst
1158 Idaho Street, Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-5000 ext. 307
E-mail: dtweedy@labor.state.id.us